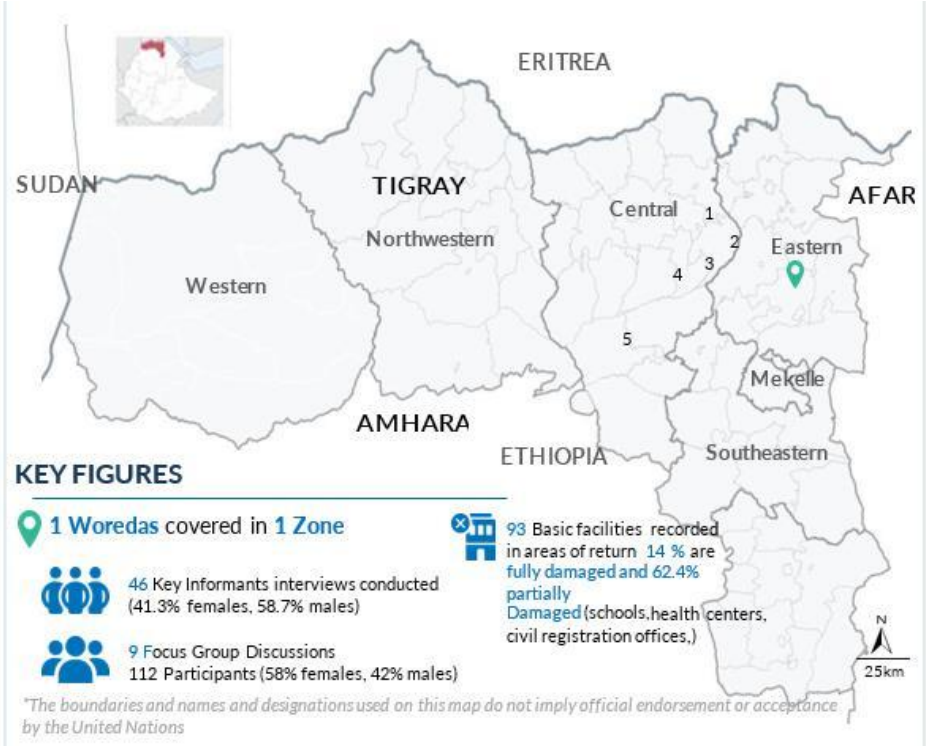
OVERVIEW

UNHCR, in partnership with its partner, OSSHD, conducted Protection Monitoring and Solutions (PMS) Assessment. The assessment aimed to evaluate the situation of IDP returnees, the majority of whom were returned from Mekelle and Eastern zone (particularly from Adigrat town) and their protection concerns following their return to their places of origin. It also sought to examine the services provided to returnees, the integration process between returnees and host communities, and the reactions of host communities toward the returnees.

The PMS Assessment was conducted from 18 to 20 November 2025 in Adigrat Woreda, Eastern Zone of Tigray region.



The boundaries and names and designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Figure 1: Locations of PMS Assessment

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This PMS Assessment report is based on the harmonized Protection Monitoring and Solutions (PMS)tools. The assessment employed four distinct tools to capture a comprehensive overview and gather detailed information about IDP returnees' situation. These tools included focus group discussions (FGDs) with returnees and host community members, key informant interviews (KIIs) with community leaders and service providers, facility mapping to collect data on service infrastructures and direct observation to assess living conditions and service accessibility.

According to the PMS Assessment methodology, data and information for this typical report were Collected through:

- **46 Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) conducted**: 27 males (58.7%) and 19 females (41.3%). Of those interviewed, 27% were IDP returnees, 67% were from host community/affected population and 7% were IDPs.
- **09 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** organized for 112 participants of which 47 males (42%) and 65 females (58%).
- **93 basic facilities** (schools, health centers, markets, civil registration offices, etc.) recorded in the visited woredas, of which 14% are fully damaged and 62.4% are partially damaged.
- **Direct observation in each location:** documentation of visual and auditory observation to help shape the understanding of the situation.

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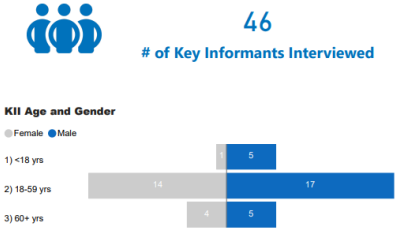
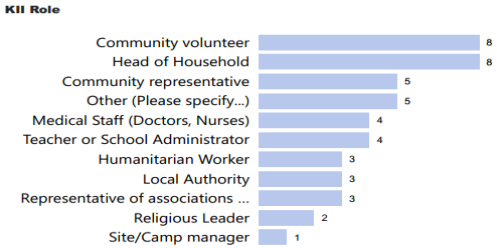
FINDINGS OF THE KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Key Informant Interview

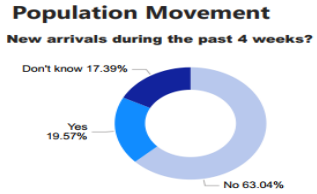
The key informants were mainly community volunteers and heads of households (8 each), followed by community representatives and others (5 each). Medical staff and teachers school administrators accounted for 4 each, while humanitarian workers, local authorities, and association representatives were 3 each. Fewer informants included religious leaders (2) and site/camp managers (1).

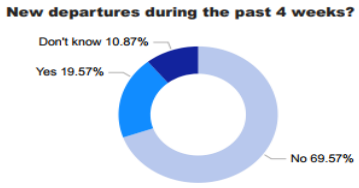




Population Movement

Most of the responses show absence of new arrivals during the past four weeks (63.4%) while 19.57% of informants responded "Yes". 17.39% of informants responded, "do not know".

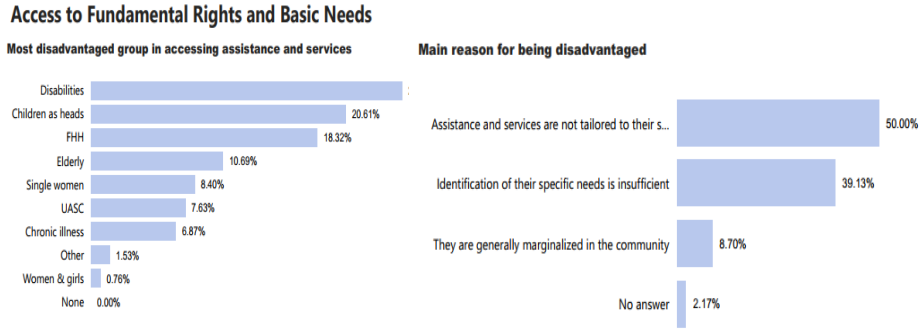




Access to Fundamental Rights and Basic Needs

Persons with disabilities are identified as the most disadvantaged group in accessing assistance and services (25.19%), followed by child-headed households (20.61%) and female-headed households (18.32%). Elderly people also face notable barriers (10.69%), while single women, unaccompanied separated children, and persons with chronic illness are affected to a lesser extent. Very few respondents identified women and girls or other groups.

The main reasons for these groups to be disadvantaged includes assistance and services not being tailored to specific needs (50%) and insufficient identification of specific needs (39.13%). General marginalization within the community was also reported to a lesser extent (8.7%).



Obstacles to access basic needs

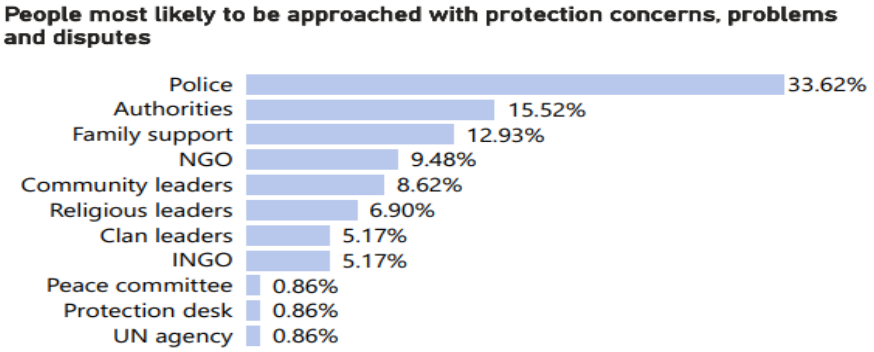
Sector	Analytical Insight
Food	The primary challenges people face is accessing food, with high prices being the most significant barrier at 26.92%. This is closely followed by food shortage (20.77%), and cash shortage (20%) highlighting economic factors as dominant issues. Other obstacles include drought (11.54%) and discrimination (4.62%).
Healthcare	The most significant obstacle to accessing health services is high medical fees (30.40%), closely followed by medicine shortage at 25.60%. Other substantial challenges include staff shortage (14.40%) and destroyed facilities (12.80%), while factors such as occupied facilities, discrimination, explosive risks, transport issues, armed presence, insecurity, long distance, and no documents constitute the remaining smaller percentages of obstacles.
Education	Reported obstacles to access education show that unaffordable materials is the most significant barrier, accounting for 37.86% of responses. This is followed by school material shortage (20.39%). While schools occupied (10.68%) and damaged schools (8.74%) are the next most common issues; other obstacles, including unpaid teachers, language issues, long distance, school closures, attack risk, and safety concerns, represent smaller percentages of the total challenges faced.
Water / WASH	Lack of access to WASH facilities is identified as the leading obstacle to Water/WASH service at 29.01%. Other significant barriers include low storage (16.79%), lack of sanitary pads (11.45%), and unsafe latrines (9.92%), while a variety of other factors such as long wait times, low hygiene awareness, and high prices for soap and water make up the remaining percentages.

Coping strategies to meet basic needs

Coping Mechanism	Always (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Don't know (%)
Buying food on credit / borrowing	60.87	39.13	-	-
Child labour	36.96	56.52	6.52	-
Changing residence/accommodation	39.13	56.52	2.17	2.17
Begging	41.3	58.7	-	-
Illegal activities (e.g., theft)	30.43	67.39	2.17	-
Withdrawing children from school	28.26	63.04	6.52	2.17
Selling humanitarian assistance	21.74	67.39	6.52	4.75
Sex in exchange for assistance/cash	6.52	84.78	2.17	6.52
Selling house and/or land	6.52	78.26	8.7	6.52
Early marriage for girls	10.87	71.74	15.22	2.17

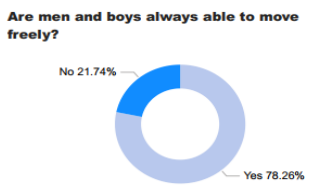
Access to Justice, Assistance and Conflict Resolution

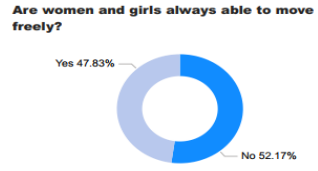
The findings show that people primarily approach the police (33.62%) and local authorities (15.52%) when seeking help with protection concerns, problems and disputes followed by family support and NGOs showing a mix of formal and informal mechanism. Community, religious, and clan leaders play a smaller yet notable role, while formal protection mechanisms such as UN agencies and protection desks are consulted least.

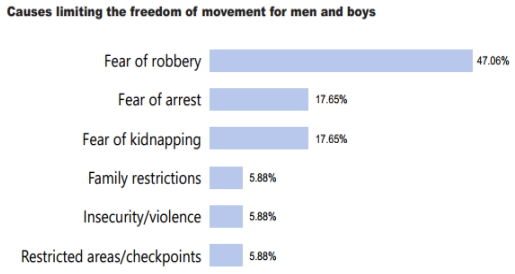


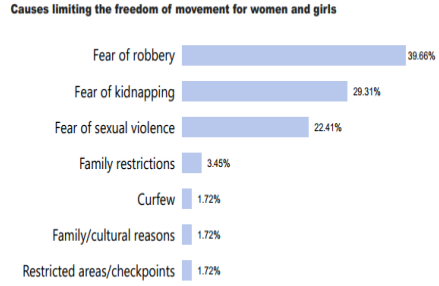
Safety and Security: Freedom of movement

The data highlights gender disparity in freedom of movement. While 78.26% of respondents report that men and boys can move freely, only 47.83% say the same for women and girls, indicating significant mobility restrictions for women and girls. The main causes limiting freedom of movement for men and boys are fear of robbery (47.08%), fear of arrest (17.65%) and fear of kidnapping (17.65%). For women and girls, the top causes are fear of robbery (39.66%), fear of kidnapping (29.31%) and fear of sexual violence (22.4%).



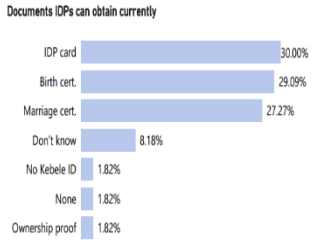


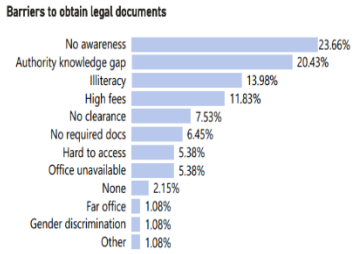


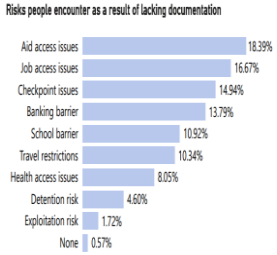


Documentation

The most common documents internally displaced persons (IDPs) can obtain include IDP card (30%), birth certificate (29.09%) and marriage certificate (27.27%). A smaller segment of respondents (8.18%) reported they don't know, while very few could obtain a Kebele ID, proof of ownership or none of the documents (1.82% each).

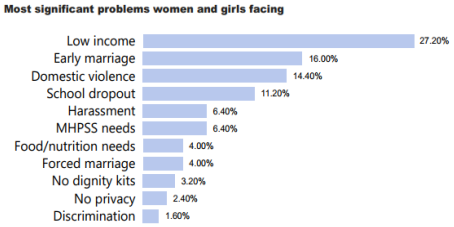


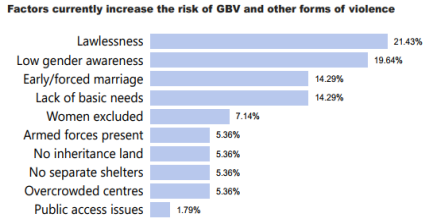




Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

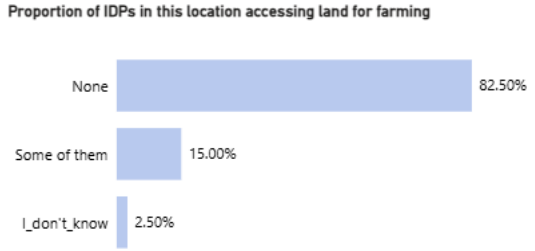
The most significant problems women and girls are facing is low income (27.2%). Other major challenges include early marriage (16%), domestic violence (14.4%), and school dropout (11.2%). Further concerns include harassment and MHPSS needs (both at 6.40%), food/ nutrition needs and forced marriage (both at 4%), lack of dignity kits (3.2)%, lack of privacy (2.4%) and discrimination (1.6%).



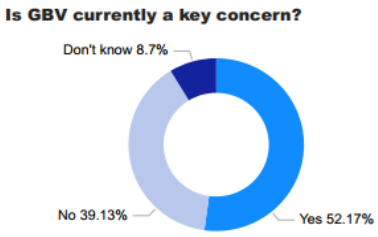


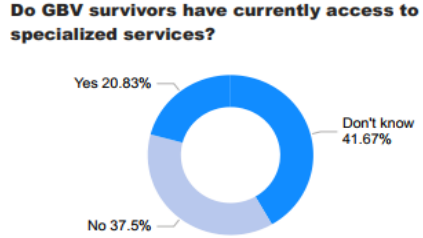
Housing, Land and Property (HLP)

The data shows that most IDPs have no access to land for farming, with 82.5% reporting they cannot farm at all. Only a small minority (15%) have partial access, highlighting extremely limited livelihood opportunities tied to land. This lack of access further reinforces dependence on aid and restricts pathways toward self-reliance and recovery.



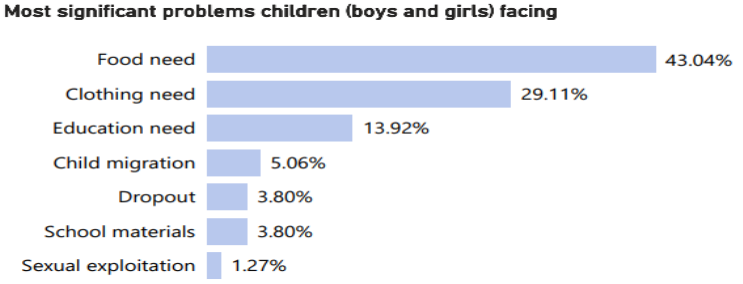
The responses to the question whether GBV currently is a key concern indicate that most said yes (52.17%), while 39.13% said No and 8.7% selected don't know.

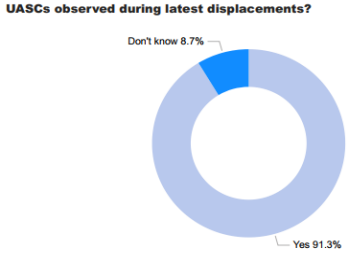


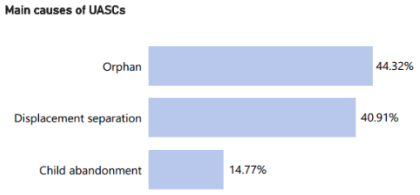


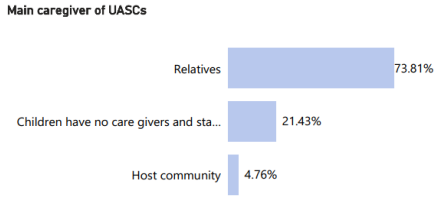
Child Protection

Food needs represent the most significant problem children, both boys and girls, are facing at 43.04%. This is followed by clothing needs at 29.11% and education needs at 13.92%. Other issues such as child migration (5.06%), school dropout (3.80%), school materials (3.80%) and sexual exploitation (1.27%) make up the remaining concerns showing the urgent need for interventions to address the multifaceted needs of children.





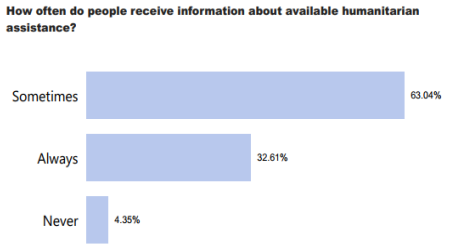


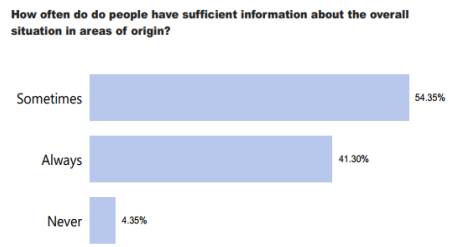


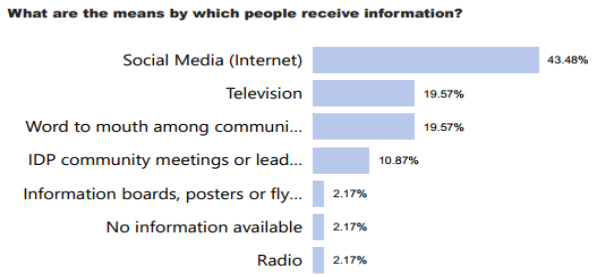
Information and Feedback Mechanism

The findings show most of the respondents (63.04%) reported that they sometimes receive information about available humanitarian assistance while 32.61% reported they always receive such information always. Only 4.35% reported the never receive such information.

Social Media (Internet) is the dominant source of information (43.48%) while Television and word to mouth among communities are the second most popular methods (both at 19.57%). Other means include IDP community meetings or leaders (10.87%) while, information boards, no information available, and radio each account for a smaller percentage of responses (all at 2.17%).

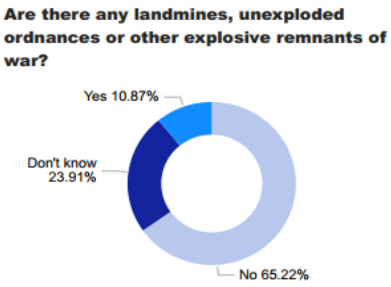


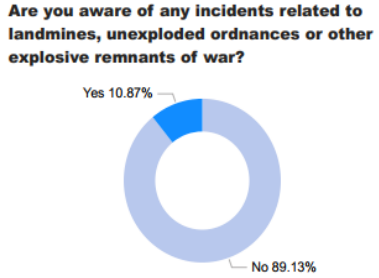


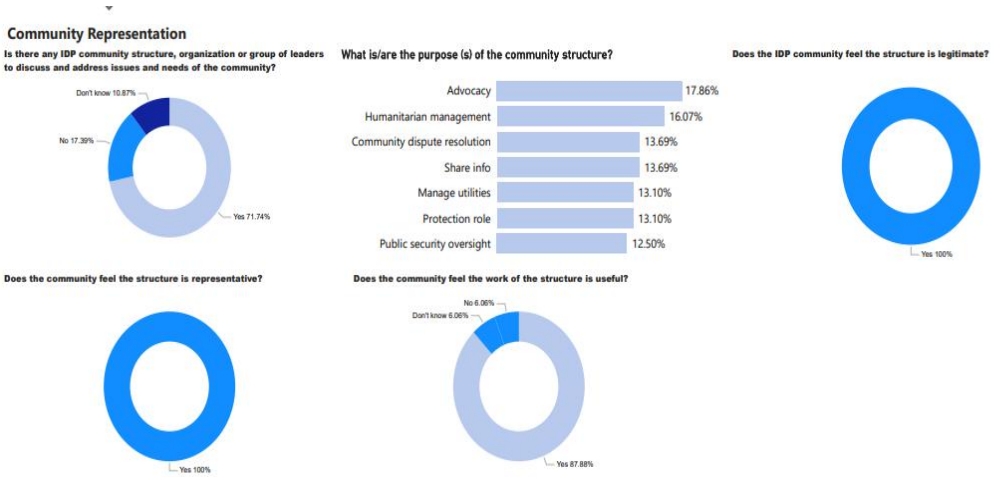


Landmines and UXOs

The responses to existence of any landmines, unexploded ordnances or other explosive remnants of war indicate that the majority of respondents (65.22%) reported No while, 23.91% reported Don't know and 10.87% answered Yes. The finding highlights the need for continued risk education and monitoring.





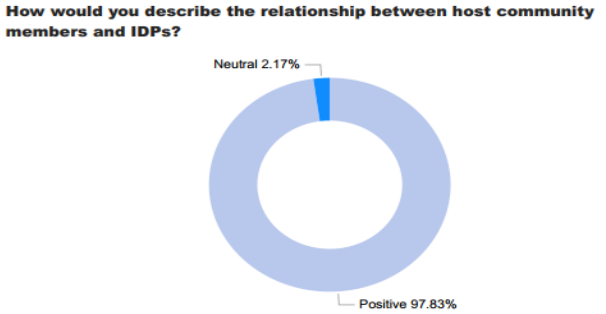


Community Representation

The findings indicate that 71.7% of respondents report the presence of an IDP community structure that discusses community needs and issues. The community overwhelmingly perceives this structure as both representative and legitimate, with 100% agreement on both aspects. The structure is also seen as useful by 87.8% of respondents. Its main functions include advocacy (17.86%), humanitarian management (16.07%), community dispute resolution (13.69%), information sharing (13.69%), utility management (13.10%), protection (13.10%), and public security oversight (12.50%), demonstrating a broad and active role in community governance and support.

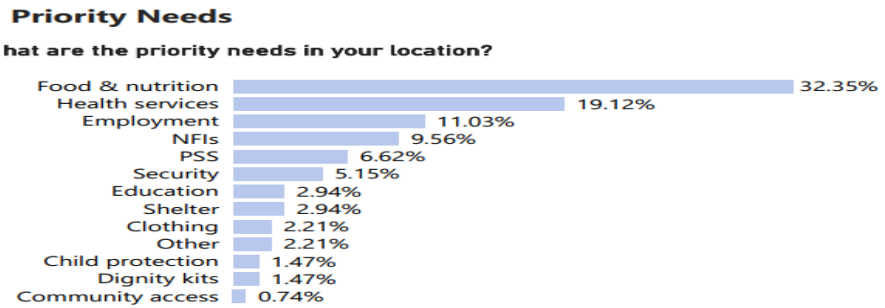
Social Cohesion

Regarding the relationship between host community members and internally displaced persons (IDPs) the results indicate an overwhelmingly positive relationship, accounting for 97.83% of responses, while only 2.17% described the relationship as neutral.



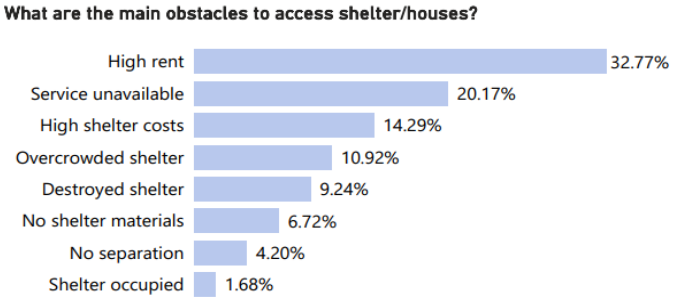
Priority Needs

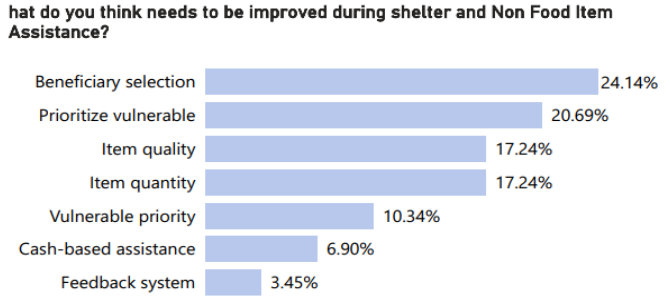
The most pressing needs in this particular location is food & nutrition, according to 32.35% of the responses. This is followed by health services at 19.12% and employment at 11.03%. Other significant needs include non-food items (NFIs) (9.56%) psychological and social support (PSS) (6.62%), and security 5.15% while, all other listed categories fall below 3%.

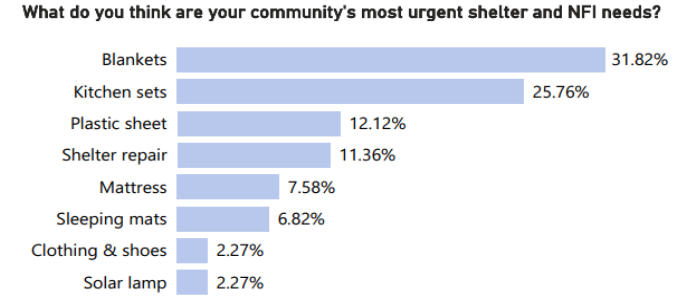


Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (ESNFI)

High rent is the most significant barrier to access shelter/houses (32.77%). This is followed by service unavailability at 20.17%, and high shelter costs at 14.29%, indicating that economic and availability factors are the primary challenges, while other issues like overcrowded or destroyed shelters make up the remaining percentages.

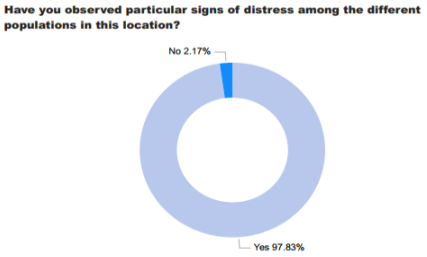


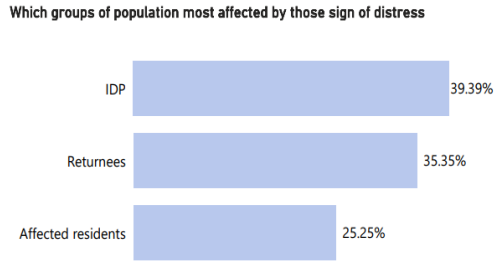




Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

97.83% of the respondents reported observing signs of distress among local populations revealing an overwhelming consensus, *underscoring the need for targeted MHPSS interventions and further assessment to understand the nature and drivers of these distress signals.*

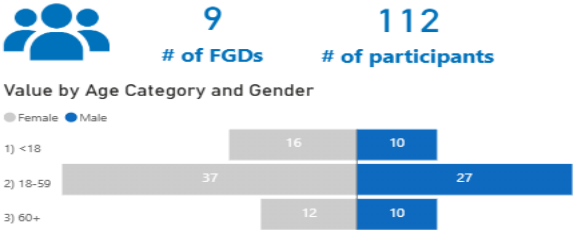




FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

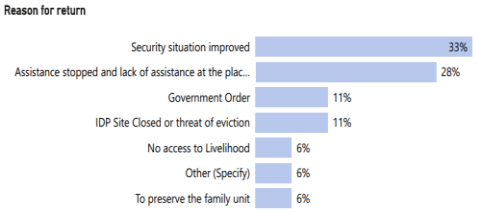
Focus group Discussions (FGDs)

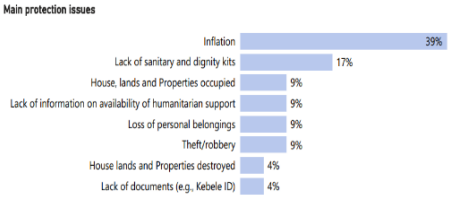
A total of 112 participants took part in the discussions, spanning all major age groups. The majority were adults aged 18–59, with 37 women and 27 men, followed by smaller but significant participation from youth under 18 (16 females, 10 males) and older persons 60+ (12 females, 10 males). This distribution reflects balanced gender representation and strong engagement across age categories, ensuring diverse perspectives in the assessment.

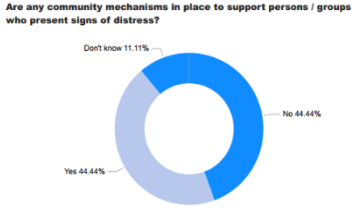


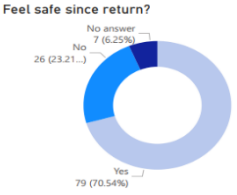
Protection Concerns

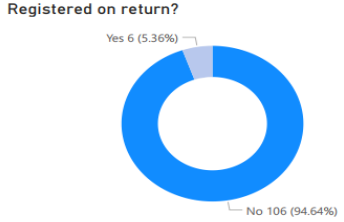
The primary factor influencing people to return to their homes is improved security situation reported by 33% of respondents. This is closely followed by the cessation of assistance and a general lack of aid at their displacement locations (28%). Other significant factors driving returns include government orders (11%) and the closure of IDP sites or threat of eviction (11%), while limited access to livelihood opportunities, the need to preserve family unity and other unspecified reasons account for the remaining reasons (6%).





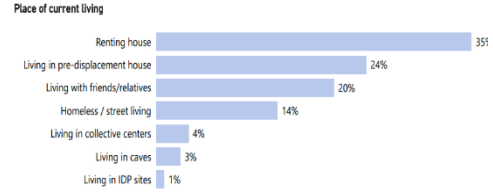


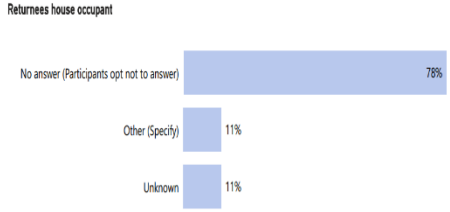


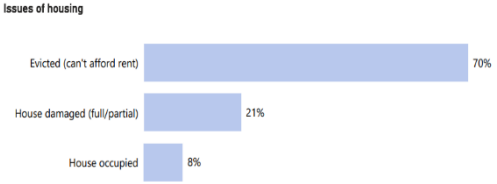


Housing, Land and Property (HLP)

The various living situations of a surveyed population reveals that the largest group (**35%)** is **renting a house**, followed by **24%** who are living in a pre-displacement house, while other living situations include living with friends and relatives (20%), homeless/street living (14%), living in collective centers (4%), living in caves (3%) and living in IDP sites (1%).

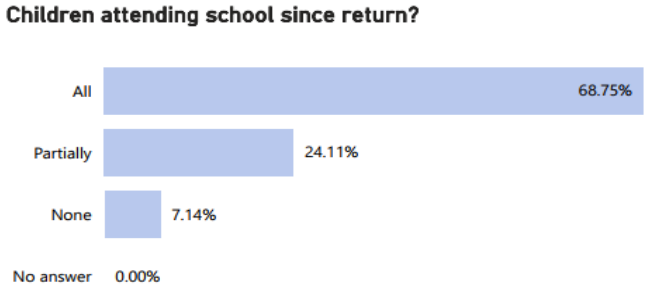






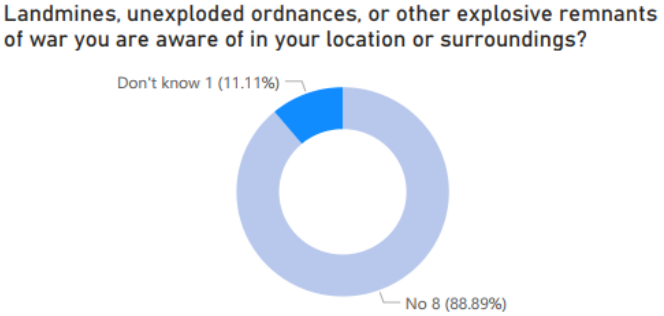
Child Protection

Majority of respondents (68.75%) reported that all children are attending school and 24.11% reported partial attendance, while a smaller segment 7.14% reported that none of the children are attending school.



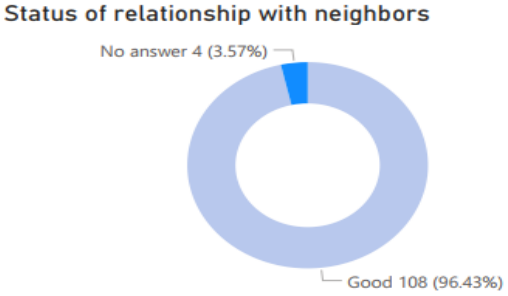
Mine Action

Most respondents (88.89%) reported absence of landmines, unexploded ordnances, or other explosive remnants of war while 11.11% responded that they don't know.



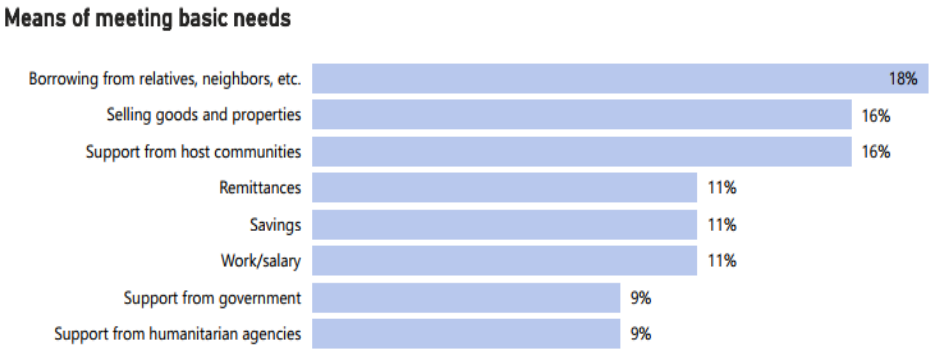
Peaceful Coexistence

Regarding relationship with neighbors, the data shows an overwhelmingly positive result with 96.43**% (108)** of respondents reporting a good relationship, while the remaining 3.57% (4) did not answer.



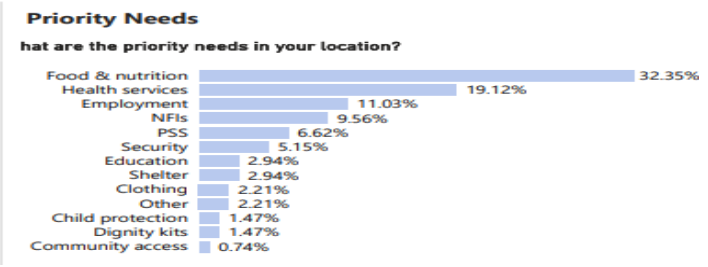
Means of Subsistence/Meeting Basic Needs

The most common means of subsistence or meeting basic needs is borrowing from relatives and neighbors (18%). This is followed by selling goods and properties and support from host communities both at 16%, highlighting a reliance on social networks and asset sales. Other significant means, each at 11%, include remittances, savings and work salary, while, support from government and humanitarian agencies represent the least common methods at 9% each.



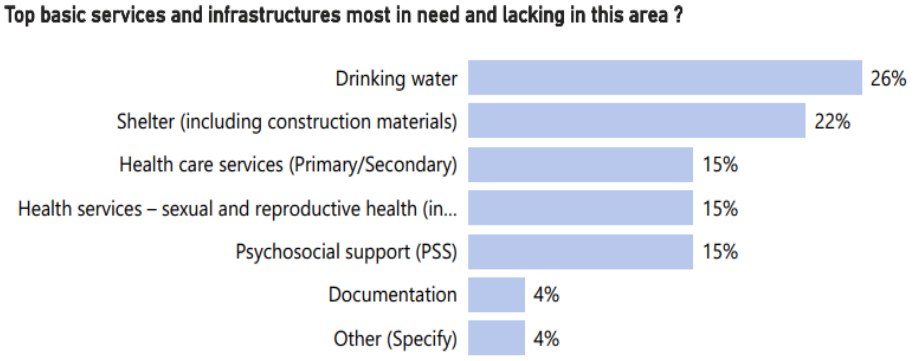
Priority Needs

The data indicates that food and nutrition are the most pressing needs in the community (32.35% of responses). This is followed by health services (19.12%) and employment opportunities (11.03%), highlighting ongoing gaps in essential services and livelihoods. Other important needs include non-food items (9.56%), psychosocial support (6.62%), and security (5.15%). Additional but lower-ranked priorities such as education, shelter, clothing, child protection, and community access show that the community continues to face a wide range of humanitarian challenges requiring coordinated response.



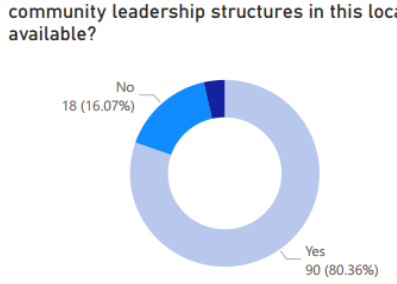
Most Needed Basic Services and Infrastructures

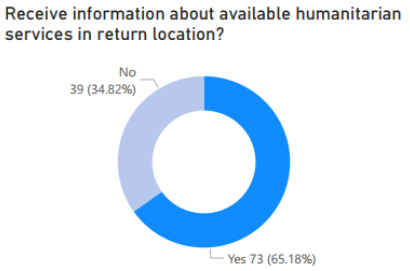
The basic services and infrastructures most are in need and lacking in the surveyed area is drinking water is (26%), followed by shelter (including construction materials) (22%). Health care services (primary and secondary), sexual and reproductive health services, and psychosocial support (PSS), each reported by 15% of the respondents, account for the third most needed basic services.



Community Structure and Access to Information

Most respondents (80.36%) reported that community leadership structures are available in their area, suggesting that local governance and representation mechanisms are generally in place. However, over one-third of households (34.82%) indicated they do not receive information about available humanitarian services, indicating a gap between existing leadership structures and effective information-sharing or communication with communities.





DIRECT OBSERVATIONS

Humanitarian Access & Security

Indicator	Findings
Unusual number of checkpoints	No (100%)
Recent security or military incidents	No (100%)
Physical obstruction to access	No (100%)
Other access impediments	No (100%)
Law enforcement actors present	Local police (100%)

Infrastructure and Housing Damage

Area Assessed	Level of Damage
Office buildings	No damage (33.33%), Repairable damage (66.67%)
Communal buildings	No damage (33.33%), Repairable damage (66.67%)
Schools	No damage (33.33%), Repairable damage (66.67%)
Health centers/posts	No damage (33.33%), Repairable damage (66.67%)
Shops & markets	No damage (33.33%), Repairable damage (66.67%)a
Water points	No damage (100%)
Roads & bridges	Repairable damage (100%)
Housing	No damage (33.33%), Partially damaged but usable (66.67%)
Camps/compounds	No damage (33.33%), Repairable damage (66.67%)

Connectivity

Indicator	Findings
Mobile network coverage	Yes (100%)
Internet service availability	Yes (100%)

Electric Power

Indicator	Findings
Regular electricity supply	Yes (66.67%), No (33.33%)

Access and Availability of Goods & Services

Education

Indicator	Findings
Children observed out of school during school hours	No (100%)
More boys or girls out of school	None (100%)
Problems/complaints about education	No (100%)

Health

Indicator	Findings
Health facilities functioning	Yes (66.67%), No (33.33%)
Lack of medicines/medical supplies	No (100%)

Agriculture

Indicator	Findings
Damage to crop land	No (100%)
Poor livestock conditions	Don't know (100%)

WASH

Indicator	Findings
Water supply disrupted	No (100%)
Functioning latrines	Yes (100%)
Safety concerns around latrines	Yes (33.33%), No (66.67%)
Signs of good hygiene practices	Yes (33.33%), No (66.67%)

Markets

Indicator	Findings
Functioning markets	Yes (100%)
Food commodities available	Yes (100%)
Non-food items available	Yes (66.67%), No (33.33%)
Rising prices (food/NFIs)	Yes (100%)

Housing & Basic Needs

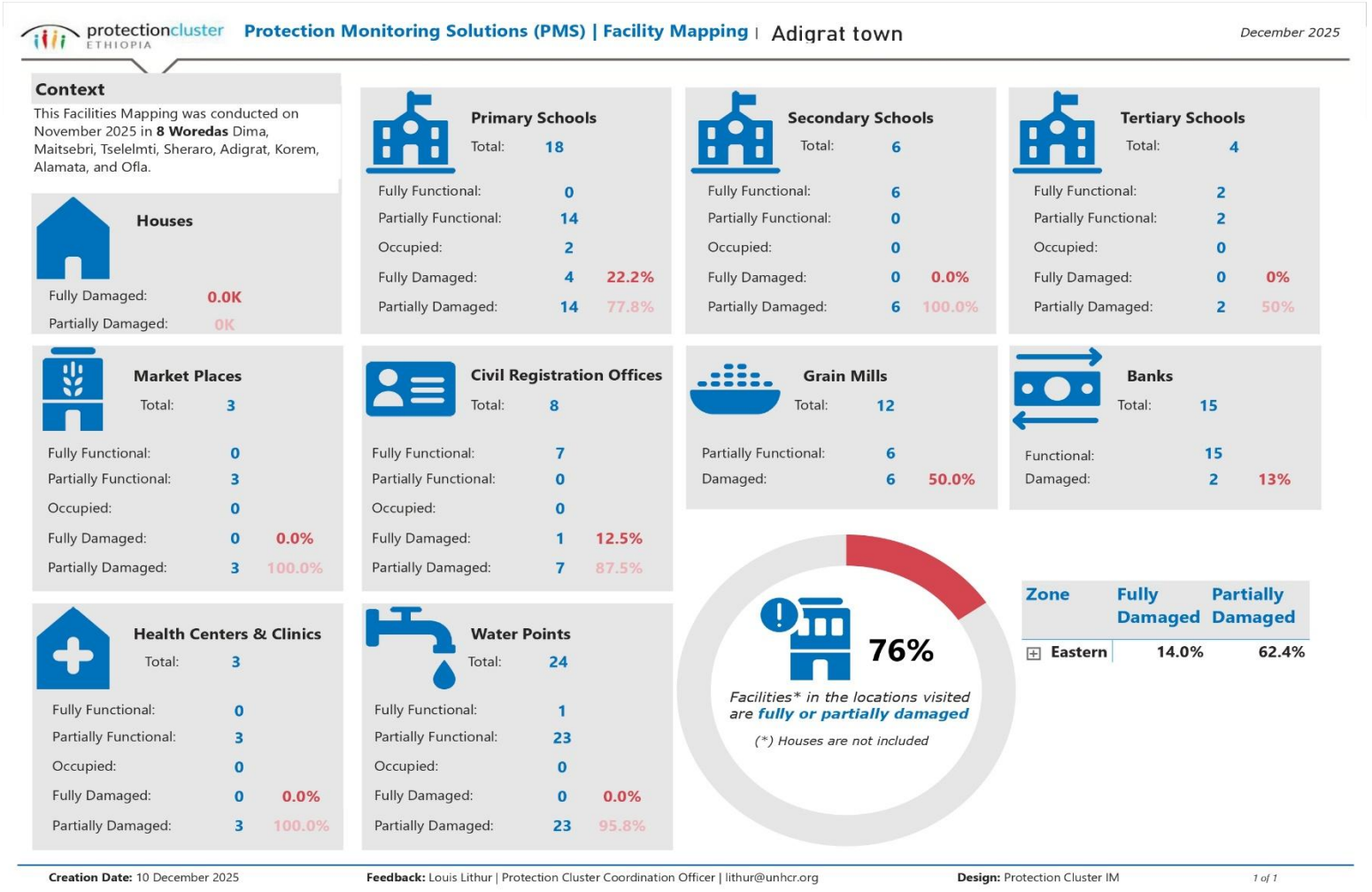
Indicator	Findings
People sleeping on the streets	Yes (100%)
People lacking clothing/blankets	No (100%)

Protection

Indicator	Findings
Humanitarian assistance observed	Yes (100%)
Unusually high presence of law enforcement/military	No (100%)
Tensions among population groups	No (100%)
Mines or unexploded ordnance	No (100%)
Civilian movement restrictions	No (100%)

MAPPING OF FACILITIES IN AREAS OF RETURN

The report on Adigrat shows severe infrastructure damage, with 76% of assessed facilities, fully or partially damaged. Primary and secondary schools face substantial impact, with many only partially functional, while tertiary institutions show 50% partial damage. All marketplaces and health centers are fully damaged, and most water points (96%) require repair, significantly restricting essential services. Civil registration offices, grain mills, and banks remain partly operational, but widespread damage across critical services underscores the urgent need for rehabilitation and restoration to support community recovery.



CRITICAL NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Urgent need for child protection, MHPSS, and GBV services: There is an urgent need to implement child protection services, including Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS), Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) related activities. These interventions should target IDPs and IDP returnees, with a specific focus on children, women, and the elderly, and should include women and girls safe spaces (WGSS), case management, and livelihood support.

- Need for food and nutrition: It is crucial to address the heightened risk of food insecurity and malnutrition in the assessed woreda. Vulnerable populations, including IDPs, children, and the elderly, are facing severe shortages of essential food supplies and nutrients. Immediate interventions are needed to provide adequate food assistance and nutritional support to these groups to prevent further deterioration of their health and well-being.

- Diverse Livelihood, Vocational Training & Support: Provide vocational training and support returnees to engage in multiple livelihood activities such as agriculture, animal farming, small businesses, and skilled trades to reduce dependency on a single income source. Furthermore, facilitate access to microfinance and market to help returnees start or expand their businesses.

- Targeted Cash Support for Immediate and long-term relief: Implement cash transfer programs including conditional cash grants such as cash for rent, housing repair, education, etc., to provide immediate financial relief to returnees. Provide targeted cash assistance for the most vulnerable groups including people with disabilities, vulnerable women and girls. Supporting the formation of community-based savings and loan groups is also necessary to promote financial inclusion and mutual support among returnees.

- Mine clearance and Safety Education: Prioritize and fund comprehensive mine clearance operations in all affected areas to ensure the safety of returnees and the broader community. Implement reporting programs and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) to educate communities about the dangers of UXOs and safe practices to avoid accidents.

- Housing, Land and Property Support: Develop targeted housing and infrastructure rehabilitation programs to repair and rebuild damaged houses and key infrastructures, ensuring safe and adequate living conditions for returnees. Provide legal assistance to returnees to help them reclaim their property rights and resolve HLP disputes. Conduct comprehensive HLP assessments in the central zone to identify and address specific HLP needs.

- Need for humanitarian support: It is imperative to improve access to humanitarian assistance, restore livelihoods, and strengthen agricultural production in the assessed woredas to address the challenges of limited aid, disrupted livelihoods, and inadequate agricultural output, which have further exacerbated the crisis. Immediate interventions are necessary to tackle these issues and mitigate the factors driving illegal migration.

- Urgent need for basic infrastructural services: The community is suffering due to extensive damage to essential infrastructure. Addressing gaps in areas such as health, education, water supply, and roads is critical for improving the well-being of the affected population, especially vulnerable groups like IDPs, children, and the elderly.

- Shelter repair: Due to the two-year long conflict, which left many family houses either fully or partially damaged in the assessed woredas, there is a need for the maintenance and reconstruction of family homes, as well as cash assistance for shelter repairs.

Photo Gallery

Figure 2: Focus Group Discussion with communities

Figure 3: Students attending classes in open spaces due to damaged class

Donor Support

UNHCR would like to thank the European Union for its support.

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